

# Humanism in Norman Mailer's War Novels

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## Abstract

*The justification for undertaking this study lies in presenting a compact picture of war themes in the novels of Norman Mailer. He feels that war can give men an opportunity to encounter an essential human condition in which an individual must call upon his deepest resources to survive. He is always conscious of his death. He feels that life is war. The Second World War presents a mirror to the human condition, which blinded anyone who looked into it. The method of searching the theme has been analytical. This paper is based on his novel, The Naked and the Dead, a traditional and symbolic novel, crystallizes the evil of War. It is the best war novel after the Second World War. Mailer's other War novel, An American Dream, is a catalogue of the conflicts. The novel presents the vision of hope for individual salvation and spiritual growth. It shows that war dehumanizes man and brings disaster of every kind.*

**Keywords—** War, death, humanism, American dream, obscenity, American society.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The war that shocked humanity had brought forward newer sources of inspiration. Men were shaken and stimulated by world events and ideas. All were reflected in the novels and short stories. It was an emotional as well as an ideological experience that radically pervaded the entire literary landscape. Any novelist dealing with those turbulent years had to impose an order upon the chaos and thus pattern it to illuminate the human situation. A novelist like Norman Mailer, writing with the avowed purpose of bringing about social change and reform, automatically commits an act of transgression.

Man, as an individual, is surrounded by society. Although most men are corrupt, weak, and evil, it is possible to survive and remain an individual through extraordinary courage, luck, and anguish. Society was no longer a comfortable abstraction but a series of afflictions. Man in society is puny and insignificant, governed by no discernible law except instinct or a mere speck of animated matter struggling for survival. They are often at war with each other in their efforts to glorify themselves. He is pushed to an intolerable level of frustration, which could only be relieved by a violent external engagement such as war. The world forces man into a position where survival and sanity depend on his balance and self-restraint. He moves in a world, which is as confused and tangled as his

own problem, but somehow holds on. Men endured the cruelty and terror of life only by the sufferance of his senses and his occasional enjoyment of them. However, if only he could convey them perfectly in that sufferance and enjoyment lay the artist's particular triumph.

In Mailer's Words, the essential mission in his war novels is a quest for a hero, someone to be emulated in terms of cultural survival. However, Mailer's vision of America deep in plague makes his culture seem more dead than alive. As a result, Mailer's search for a hero is difficult because there can be no expert on heroism when more ripe for villainy. Since we all have our own idea of God and the Devil, it is hard for the idea not to change. Mailer believes there is a God and a Devil at war with one another. If there is a war continuing between God and the Devil for humankind, this war is much more complex than a simple confrontation for the future of humankind. "We are literally bleeding God we are leeching him, depriving Him of his vision"(Adam, 1975, p.208)

With the current state of man's world, earthly centres of evil have rivalled Hell. In Mailer's works, all the major characters admit that they are in Hell. People in power have no human understanding and sympathy for ordinary people. The world is wanting in love, mercy, generosity and justice. Mailer believes that man's salvation lies in his commitment to growth and courage, which is why he

depends on the goodness of man. The removal of all such social restraints may bring about the dawn of a better world in which man is more good than evil. Mailer charts the anomaly, cancer, and plague that have come to America and proposes several solutions based on the principle that we must not suppress our desires but rather channel them into artful activities. He is the humanist of the bright hopes of humankind. He wishes to return man to his rightful place in society and advises man not to surrender to authority or conformity. In his opinion, human rights are best won by a face-to-face confrontation.

## II. THE HUMANISM IN MAILER'S VISION AND WRITINGS

Mailer is a visionary. He is a prophet of hope and optimism. His writings cover almost all the issues which are crucial in our twentieth-century world. He is a humanist because he endeavours to forge an ethic that will restore the individual's place in an era of demoralization, spiritual bankruptcy and crisis in human values.

However, many writers differed among themselves in the details of their criticism, the Humanists shared several views in their survey of morality and taste that the most critical part of the American part was New England Puritanism. The writers were interested in a kind of culture, a kind of literature, a psychological and moral effect. If these could be found in literary history, they were perhaps best seen in eighteen-century England. They were much concerned over the presence and the exercise of moral will.

Upon these crucial points, the Humanistic judgment of tradition depended. The question of standards was closely identified with this judgment. These standards require a remarkable description of the moral nature; man is both natural and human, there is a lower and higher nature, a bestial and a divine. The true artist is aware indeed of the bestial in man but sees something else and looks for the meaning of life. Norman Forester (American criticism 1928) offered a description of the humanist personality. He will be a complete man, he will acknowledge and value proportion and lie will have standards, he will understand the moral constant that has appeared in cultures of the past, he will be a man of reason but also a man of imagination, he will above all recognize that the "ultimate ethical principle is that of restrain or control" (Hoffman, p.166) This Humanist personality should also be able to detect the failures of literature and thought for what they are, his moral faculty is all but identical with his critical and the two functions, basically in harmony.

The philosophy of Humanism finds its master truth not in men as they are (Realism) or in men as worse than they are

(Naturalism) or in men as they wish to be (Romanticism), but in men, as they ought to be with reference to the perfection of the human type. He propounds the theory of existentialism to be used as a potent weapon in a war against totalitarianism.

Our lives are truly existential, that we are not going to end up well. You see, there is always been this sort of passive confidence implicit in Christianity, the confidence that things are going to work out all right. One does have to die, that is true, but if one keeps one's nose reasonably clean, one is going to heaven. And what's happened now is we're entering an existential period in our history where nothing is nailed down. All the American faiths are being exploded. We lived for too long in a paranoid dream that believed communism was the secret of all evil on earth because it was the social embodiment of the Devil. (Mailer, 1985, p.87)

In Mailer's writings, the individual in the contemporary world is constantly in danger of being destroyed by the social environment he inhabits. At the same time, these writings give a clear call for the protection of the individual against the repressed conditions of society. Mailer's world is towards harmony and development. With the help of his writings, Mailer attempts to do away with social ills that afflict Americans. He wants American society to usher in an era of peace and prosperity. Unless a man keeps his courage, Mailer feels there is no love or mercy in our society. This type of society makes great demands on the courage of the man. If one is to be a man, one must possess the force to change the world. In Mailer's view, the novelist has the responsibility not merely to make imaginative construction from reality but also to offer a sufficiently compelling vision of the present and future possibilities in the world.

All through Mailer's literary development, his experiments with the novel form, the short story, essay, journalism, interview, biography and drama, he searches for a style consistent with the consciousness of his time, the quest for a hero whose voice is big enough to carry the vision which would classify the image of a nation.

In Mailer's view, *The Naked and the Dead* is a symbolic book, and its basic theme is a conflict between the beast and seer in man. In the character of Hearn, Cummings, Croft and Valsen and each soldier's character in the platoon, Mailer uses the war situation to explore the

questions of man's basic desires and psychic needs. Every man is forced to confront the fact of death, and by his experiences, he is stripped naked. "Cummings belief is that man's basic drive is to achieve power over other men and the natural world". (Radford, 2013, p.8) . He recognizes the undefined and mighty hunger in himself as the most expansive vision that has ever entered his soul and accepts it as his own and of all men as well. He dedicates himself to the power of morality, and this dedication makes him heroic. As Philip Buftis remarks that General Cummings represents, then, Mailer's self-projection of himself as the romantic artist convinced that he is possessed of the ability to recreate the world. (Rollyson, 2000, p.45) Cummings is also markedly devoid of sympathy for others - as though his self-contained emotions are requisite to his exercise of power.

Croft's heroic potential is more potent than that of Cummings. He surpasses all ineffective leadership and active courage. He represents another aspect of the seer in man with no political theory of his power of command over the man in the platoon and accepts their fear and hatred as the unavoidable fate of that leadership. Like Cummings, he feels no desire or regrets other kinds of relationships and Croft dislikes being touched. The result, as Andrew Gordon has noticed, is a novel with a very narrow emotional range. Croft, like Cummings, feels a special closeness with Mount Anaka. His attempt to reach the mountain's peak shows his courage, which is heroic because he attempts to conquer the elements with his willpower. When he climbs the mountain, Croft has the ability to know how to move from ridge to ridge: "He had the mountain in his teeth as completely and excitedly as a hound which has picked up the scent." (Mailer, 1948, 635) His courage and willpower are some of Mailer's heroic figures.

Judging other men in these terms, both Croft and Cummings feel only contempt for those who lack the willpower to the power struggle. Croft's reaction to Red's rebelliousness is contemptuous dismissal, "It was always the men who never got anywhere who did the bitching". Red is convinced that "Nobody gets what he wants" (Mailer, 1948, p.140). What Croft dislikes more about Hearn is his desire to be friendly with the platoon.

Cummings is disappointed with Hearn for similar reasons though they are expressed differently. He forces Hearn to pick up the cigarette butt on pain of court-martial. Cummings asks Hearn what he takes man's deepest urge to be. When Hearn suggests it is the sexual urge, he dismisses it, and in further conversation with Hearn, he justifies power morality for romantic fascism. The General has a

vision, and as a General, he is free to make choices among the existing avenues to power.

The truth of it is that from man's very inception there has been one great vision blurred first by the exigencies and cruelties of nature, and then as nature began to be conquered by the second great cloak economic fear and economic striving ..... there's that popular misconception of man as something between a brute and an angel. Actually, man is in transit between brute and God. (Mailer, 1948, p.323)

Cummings is hypnotized by power and believes in the fear ladder, which gives him control over his men, but Hearn disagrees. Robert Hearn states that Cummings is an existentialist because, for him, every moment is a moment of crisis in which his private destiny as a leader is bound inextricably with the death-like destiny of his culture. What grieves here is that Hearn does not oppose fascist-like Cummings by offering a consistent humanist view of human nature. Instead, Hearn forcefully accepts Cummings view of man and is thrown back into self-denigration. His political liberalism fails to oppose General Cummings American fascism, but it also fails at the practical level in his relationship with other men. As a platoon leader, he likes the tension of the battle and commands, which produces a suppressed joy and excitement in him. He echoes the sentiments of Roth and hates the field officers because they had wrapped the finest minds of his generation.

Despite their different positive qualities, both Hearn and Valsen fail to maintain even their ideas of themselves. Red Valsen left his woman and child for no fault in their past, with whom he has lived happily for many years. Both Hearn and Valsen do not have an alternative to the exponents of the power of morality, and neither offers a vision of their heroic possibilities. Cummings senses that Hearn can be converted to his views, and he plays a subtle game with the lieutenant until Hearn rebels and disdainfully throws a cigarette on Cummings floor. It is Goldstein and Ridges, the two who accept the burden of their interdependence and offer a glimpse of a quite different type of heroic endeavour. The invasion of Anopopei to subdue the Japanese platoon, the jungle and the weather are the determining forces of the platoon's existence. Those who struggle heroically against these conditions are the novel's seers. The men who are constantly hindered in the battle by the force of nature or to another's will or obstacles are unheroic.

While describing the two expeditions, the Mount Anaka climbers and those who carry Wilson on a litter to the beach, Norman Mailer sees the litter-bearer's journey in terms of religious traits. However, it is possible to know something about Ridges by the comment made by Goldstein. "Ridges was a good man; there was something enduring about him" (Mailer, 1948, p.527)

Both Goldstein and Ridges continue long after there is any hope of sowing Wilson's life to the point where their efforts are to get the body to the shore. Similarly, Croft and his group have been unable to climb the mountain resulting in the virtual defeat of the Japanese. Both journeys become futile. They symbolize seer in man, but Goldstein and Ridges' heroism cannot set right the American society because the goodness, which they possess, can endure such a world but does not change it. Underlying the intensity of Croft's love for violence and his assault upon the external world, Mailer identifies him as a strong enough hero to change the world. Croft's personality has hardened so that he is characterized repeatedly by the statement. "I hate everything which is noting myself." (Mailer, 1948, p.164)

Mailer's other novel, *An American Dream*, creates a hero, Rojack, endowed with superhuman imagination. Rojack in *An American Dream* is a more mature version of Mailer's earlier novel, *The White Negro*. It is an example of Mailer's hope that an individual can survive in a corrupt and hostile society. In this novel, it is seen that love for one's mate can represent the greatest single optimistic hope for the individual brave enough to earn it.

From the beginning of the novel, Rojack is established as an existentialist who differs from Kennedy in abyss and magic. The American Dream has turned into a nightmare of material success. However, Rojack's dream of ecstasy and violence underlines the sedation of American life and therefore is authentic for the American nation. Before the beginning of the dream, he has lost hope in the possibilities of growth provided by the culture. Rojack realizes that he is a total failure. He rejects politics and other forms of the American Dream of power. He fails to understand the existential abyss of dread rationally, but his realization of dread is religious for him, and it separates him from the conventional heroes of his culture.

The real difference between the President and myself maybe that I ended with too large an appreciation of the moon, for I looked down the abyss on the first night. I killed four men, four very separate Germans, dead under a full moon whereas Jack for all I know,

never said the abyss. (Mailer, 1965, p.24)

The relevance of Rojack's dream to American's need for a hero is established. His adventures in the thirty-two hours of the novel are not an assortment of dull cruelties, and callous copulations or the charge that *An American Dream* is a very dirty book is not justified.

Of course *An American Dream* is not good or bad simply because it deals with aspects of life seldom treated with candour in serious literature and ever less frequently with Mailer's relish of detail. It is an introspective novel. Mailer has created the style of a contemporary introspective novel. Mailer has created the style of contemporary introspection, at once violent, educated and cool. (Poirier, 1956, p.163)

In Rojack's life, he aims at the attainment of salvation and the realization of God. Rojack, a middle-aged professor of existential psychology, believes that magic dread and the perception of death were the roots of motivation. Rojack is not immune to the fascinations of power and murders his wife Deborah, a rich heiress, in a violent struggle at her apartment because she represents the forces of darkness from which he must save his soul. She is a symbol of the beast that the sear must overcome. Rojack inherits her power and light with her death, which she cannot take to the underworld.

She was bad in death a beast stared back at me. Her teeth showed the point of light in her eye was violent, and her mouth was open. It looked like a cane. I could hear some mind, which reached down to the cellars of sunless earth. A little line of spit comes from the corner of her mouth. (Mailer, 1965, p.43)

In *An American Dream*, Rojack digs a hole for himself, a grave, a death scene from which he does not begin to emerge until he kills Deborah. By strangling her to death, Rojack gains new life and grace. Moreover, this madness of murderous impulse should not be denied, and it should be realized "Cancer is the growth of madness denied" (Weatherby, 1977, p.113). American society may go for a checkup since madness co-exists with sanity. By killing his wife, he purges his own requirement of being an American existentialist.

The hero as a murderer seems reasonably healthy and straightforward in his approach to power and its manipulations in the novel. He has a vision of a heavenly



city, and a little later, feels as though he was reborn. "I had a view of what was on the other side of the door and I heaven was there." (Mailer, 1965, p.35)

After the murder, he encounters limitations and possibilities represented by her maids Ruta and Cherry. Immediately afterwards, Rojack confronts Shago Martin - a singer, an elegant Negro with skin as dark as midnight and Barney Kelly are suffused with a similar combination of violence and sexuality. Rojack defeats Shago and throws him down the stair, which purges some of Rojack's own fear and hatred. He enters the Waldorf to encounter Kelly with the umbrella handed to him by Cherry. Rojack is gripped with fear and feels as if he were in hell, "For a moment I had died and was in the ante-chamber of Hell. I had a long vision of hell not of its details, of its first moment." (Mailer, 1965, p.194)

Rojack's other confrontation scene is with Kelly. As Andrew Gordon noticed, Kelly resembles General Cummings. Both men have cold grey eyes and frigid, bitchy wives. Then, Rojack is again enraged as Kelly sets for Rojack the challenge of walking the parapet outside his apartment. Despite this cold-blooded push, Rojack throttles his rage. After one quick blow, he flings the umbrella over the edge. His throwing of the umbrella shows his sacrifice of the drive-in Rojack for suicide and murder. Finally, he fights with Kelly to overcome him.

Kelly is a devil, and he has given his content to the power of darkness in America. Rojack survives the violent scene on Kelly's balcony. He is purified and is free to pursue his new life. However, his battle with the devil is not yet over, and he tries to maintain the balance on the brink. If he failed to balance, he is liable to fall, for there was nothing as delicate in the entire world as one has lost touch of control.

At the end of the novel, Rojack's position does not seem very hopeful and encouraging, but due to Mailer's attempt to focus upon mystical notions such as soul and spirit. Rojack, towards the end, feels free, brave and strongman through his resourcefulness. In this novel, Mailer's view of American society is as bleak as it is set forth in *The Naked and the Dead*. Elaborating upon the metaphysical dimensions of human struggle, he acknowledges that everything, which is alive or intent, or obsessed, must wage an active war. It creates the possibilities for form in its environment by every attempt to shape the environment.

Although quite many men are demoralized, it is possible through great courage for a man to achieve grace and solution. With the hipster's urge to impinge on people and events, the soul, although passive and acted upon by its environment, tries to locate itself in an object or person in

order to perpetuate the form of its being. The success of Rojack is of considerable inspiration to the American character. In Mailer's early and middle work, the beast in man appears to be strong enough to subdue seer in him, but then such a disaster is arrested as the seer in man overshadows the beast. The plague in America ultimately becomes for Mailer, a more powerful force standing beyond spirit but sharing its tendency to deaden the soul.

In accord with his increasing emphasis upon the self, Mailer does not refer to racial or religious categories but to men who possess a particular sense of their own lives. Unlike D.J., however, Mailer locates himself beyond the conflicts, which are described. His favourite theory is that America is run by a mysterious hidden mastermind, a secret creature with a brain where he can throw out all his corporate management of thoughts. This purification is closely connected to the use of obscenity in the book. While in *The Naked and the Dead*, obscenity functioned to undercut the military hierarchy, which Mailer details in *The Armies of the Night*. Mailer favours the purifying effect of giving free rein to obscenity in one's speech or writing as it cures a man of his obscene thoughts. Mailer states categorically that the war in Vietnam was obscene, and he explains why America's leaders are opposed to verbal obscenity: "Yes, the use of obscenity was indeed to be condemned for the free use of it would wash away the nation-was America the first great power to be built on bullshit." (Mailer, 1977, p.201)

Mailer warns that banning obscenity may prove fatal. Those who ban obscenity are like the Rustys of America, bottling up their rages and fears, which are then channelled into an obscene war. The purging of obscenity does affect purification, but then why would D.J. and Tex go to Vietnam? W. Aldridge gives the following interpretations: Now they have conquered the impulse in themselves, they do not need Vietnam as an outlet for their hostilities, and so it is certain that they will be as derisively antagonistic to the war as they have been to the sick pretensions of Rusty's world" (Lucidoston, 1971, p.97) This interpretation is half true because D.J. and Tex are very eager to proceed to Vietnam and their communication with nature intensifies their violence, which gets its outlet in fighting in Vietnam. If Mailer's thinking about the Vietnam War has changed, it has only been in the direction of a greater exploration of the psychological needs which the war serves.

In Vietnam War, Mailer is more patient in his hope for a transformation of American society. Throughout the novel, he speaks of a revolution that will take place with the aid of electoral politics. He presents his earlier idea that the war between the privileged and the oppressed has been superseded by the conflict between those who would

maximize the productive resources of civilization and others concerned with developing a more instinctive mode of life.

Mailer is a novelist of humanitarianism. He is grieved to see society governed and dominated by the sinister. In Vietnam War, Mailer, in accord with his increasing emphasis upon the self, offers a more psychological explanation. He does not refer to racial or religious categories but to men who possess a particular sense of their own lives. In Vietnam, then Lyndon Johnson merely acts for all of America since everyone is a member of a minority group. Lyndon Johnson and other Americans were pushed to an intolerable level of frustration, which could only be relieved by a violent external engagement such as the Vietnam War. Mailer really believes that the American government and the majority of people seek to eliminate dissent and diversity and provide a home for mass men. The forces of totalitarianism, corruption, greed, exploitation, commercialism, violence and crime. Mailer hopes that the New World of happy hopes and glorious fulfilment of man's aspirations would come to an end provided the degenerated American society heeds to his counsels. Mailer, in his writings, looks for a dynamic hero with a strong voice to carry the vision of the regeneration and reconstruction of human society.

Mailer puts all the protagonists of his works to the test. General Cummings and Croft in *The Naked and the Dead* suffer from serious flaws of one sort or another and render themselves incompetent to get rid of society from social evils. Mailer succeeds in his quest for the hero in *An American Dream*; Rojack takes to violence and sex and purges himself of the cancerous tendencies. Evil urges, which, if repressed, leads to morbidity and cancer. With his heavy emphasis upon intuition, he presents through Rojack a worldview that lacks intellectual solidity. Thus Rojack brings about his salvation. This salvation is the salvation of society. Mailer's message is that this present corrupt society may be replaced by a society of human happiness if its inhabitants are the men of commitment to growth, possess courage, will and large vision.

A sick America immediately subverts Mailer's ideals that a hero should represent the major themes of his ethos, which would mean a hero at home. Existential man is the total of the acts, which comprise his existence. At any specific moment, a hero is a hero, no less and no more. Will power can transform regulator into a rebel, a coward into a brave man, victim into victimizer. Heroism and villainy are moral correlatives rather than moral alternatives. The concept gives Mailer's protagonists their own moral tones. Mailer further ignores traditional heroism except for his consistent belief that courage is a key attribute to possess

courage is to be potentially heroic, possibly even representative of the ethos. Mailer's ideal heroism will not be expressed until he ends his intense search for a prototypic figure that represents cultural survival and culture worthy enough to be saved. Mailer believes that the modern man should return to a more simplified and more natural existence.

Mailer concluded by saying the real war was not between west and east but between the conservative and the rebel, authority and instinct between two views of God. The conservative view is that the rich and the poor are born in their respective places. The rebel's view-Mailer's view-is that society is caught up in a war between God and the Devil.

man must serve as God's agent, seeking to shift the wealth of our -universe in such a way that the talent, creativity, and strength of the future ..... will show us what a mighty renaissance is locked in the unconscious of the dumb.  
(Mills,1982, p.258)

So Mailer, through his war novels, attempts to make the people realize their bad ways of life and save themselves from dehumanization.

### III. CONCLUSION

Mailer's army experiences have deepened his pre-existing conception of American life as a desperate gamble in which men are futile pawns on the giant chessboard of circumstances. He regards totalitarianism as the most dreaded antagonist of American society. It is a moral disease, and it induces psychic pacification. In all his works, Mailer has attacked this evil eclipsing American society. In his war novels, Mailer calls upon people to protect themselves against the totalitarian society in which they live. It dulls one's sense of death.

For Mailer, the war had unreal quality. He speaks the truth and gives a realistic account of American life, which shows the weakness, corruption and moral degradation of contemporary American society. Most of the fighting men are portrayed as depraved, twisted, or stumped by the disintegrating forces and counter forces at work in their world. Through a close reading of his novels, it is possible to find that Mailer remains cynical and pessimistic in his works. He realistically portrays the crises of human values and spiritual impoverishment. Mailer presents in the theme the struggle of life and form against death and chaos. Being a social critic, Mailer depicts America's

preoccupation with crime, violence, sex and technology, and all other contemporary social issues and problems.

Mailer was writing to justify himself to the world. However, his essential purpose has always been to delve deep into the centre of the American psyche and report his finding with utmost sincerity. Mailer is very violent in his attack upon social decadence. Mailer, like a painter, paints American life across a number of canvases, shaking people up, stamping on them, and showing how life is stalemated and defeated by the forces of death.

He shows that the individual is locked up in the machine world of modern society. The writings of Mailer are pervaded by the personal expression of the life of Mailer. Coming across his war novels, it is possible to discover that the heroes of his works are spokesman of Mailer whose passion, urges and agonies have remarkable affinities with those of Mailer's life. Rojack, the chief character in *An American Dream*, resembles Mailer in several ways with some of his farther ambitions, a slightly idealized Mailer and his philosophy of life. Mailer has put his ingenuity into the mouth of his heroes. Rojack shows the rot, stink and stench of contemporary American society. The autobiographical expression of life is present in many of the writings of Norman Mailer. He reflects on the disappointing aspirations, the failure and the sorrow of his time. In his works, he informs about domestic problems and social evils.

Mailer portrays the tragic experience of the American machine-age. He, as a war novelist, feels that they are disillusioned and sad. Decent human gestures are not possible in the presence of the military machine as it brings out the worst in everybody. They are devoid of human values. They are uprooted and betrayed, and in these horrible conditions, he attempts to make people realize their bad ways of life. therefore, he shows people how to save themselves from dehumanization. He shows his ability to struggle against despair in his novels. He pinpoints the limitations and weaknesses of his age. He attempts to depict America's spiritual poverty in the midst of material progress. As compared to his contemporary writers, he attempts to forge an ethic that will restore the place of the individual in an era of depersonalization, alienation and rapid change.

Through Mailer's novels, it is possible to study the degradation of American life with all its misery and sickness. His morals are compounded by courage, engagement with death and commitment to growth. He alone stands among his contemporaries in possessing a coherent metaphysics of the human condition as it now exists. He becomes the social microcosm and mirrors the weakness, corruption and inadequacies of this world. He

feels that men must have social as well as individual patterns of action if they want to prevail and ultimately overcome the inhuman tendencies within modern society. While confronting the complex and chaotic aspects of contemporary civilization, he satisfies the needs of postwar Americans than others. It is possible to witness in his works the deepest consciousness of the postwar period. The world is always a grey horror, everything comes undone, and the heroes are always broken. The war exists as something oppressive. War seems only the last brazen cruelty of the enemy, the outrage inflicted upon those who would live bravely, be a part of it, and be passionately free.

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